

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003074

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/BCLTV, S/CT; HQ USPACOM FOR FPA HUSO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/09/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [TH](#) [BM](#) [BURMA](#)

SUBJECT: BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS IN THAILAND DENY
INVOLVEMENT IN RANGOON BOMBING

REF: RANGOON 542

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert J. Clarke, Reason: 1.5 (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: Burmese exile groups based in Thailand have denied any connection to the bombings in Rangoon on May 7, 2005. Most speculated, without any providing any hard evidence, that former associates of ousted Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and the military intelligence services might be responsible. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) stated that 128 Thai citizens attending a Thai trade fair in Rangoon had returned safely to Bangkok on May 8. End Summary.

ACCUSED GROUPS ALL DENY INVOLVEMENT

12. (SBU) Following the May 7 bombings in Rangoon, which killed at least 11 people (Reftel), the Karen National Union (KNU), the National Coalition Government, Union of Burma (NCGUB) and the Shan State Army (SSA) all publicly denied involvement in the attacks. All of the groups were named by the SPDC military regime as being responsible for the bombings. The KNU statement, issued on May 8, stated, "This is an outrageous atrocity of inhuman (sic) act and we, the KNU, strongly oppose and condemn it." Nang Kher Seng, spokesperson of the SSA was quoted in several media report on May 7 denying SSA involvement and stating her opinion that it was an internal struggle within the ruling SPDC. Poloff spoke in Bangkok with Sann Aung, from the Prime Minister's office of the US-based NCGUB. Sann Aung, who stated he had just returned from the Thai-Burma border town of Mae Sot, provided a written statement denying NCGUB involvement. He declined to speculate who carried out the bombings, but said the exile community at the border was rife with rumors about disgruntled former military intelligence (MI) operatives of ousted SPDC Prime Minister Khin Nyunt being responsible. (Post will send complete statements from the KNU and NCGUB via e-mail to Rangoon and EAP.)

FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS THAIS NOT THE TARGET

13. (U) Foreign Minister Kanthathi Suphamongkhon was quoted in the Bangkok Post as saying that "Thais were not the target of the bomb." Commenting on the prospects of a planned second Thai trade fair in Rangoon in November, the Deputy Trade Minister only commented that the RTG "might review" whether it will go on as planned.

14. (C) Damrong Kraikruan, Director of the MFA East Asian Affairs Division responsible for Burma, confirmed that a Royal Thai Airforce C-130 dispatched to Rangoon after the bombings had returned to Bangkok on May 8 with 128 Thai civilian evacuees. No Thai diplomats returned and the Thai embassy in Rangoon is functioning normally, according to Damrong. The civilian Thais in Rangoon were participating in a Thai trade exhibition, which was where one of the bombs went off. Damrong stated that two of the four Thais were injured by the blast in the exhibition hall, while the other two were hurt while trying to flee. At this stage, Damrong stated that it's extremely difficult to know who is responsible for the attacks and that he did not put much credit into the early claims by the SPDC of who was responsible since they were still investigating and gathering evidence from the blast scenes. He did note that the May bombings appear to be part of a worrisome trend, referring to two attacks earlier this year, one at a Rangoon restaurant and another at a Mandalay market. Damrong admitted, however, that there's no clear evidence linking the attacks to each other or to any single group. He opined that the KNU would be the least likely group to have the capacity to carry out the attack or the motivation to do so since they were still trying to negotiate a cease-fire with the SPDC. He offered no comment about further RTG reaction or about any possible impact that the bombings would have on the status of various Burmese pro-democracy groups that operate in Thailand.

14. (C) Comment. The early conclusion by FM Kanthathi about the intent of as yet unknown bombers appears aimed more at trying to assuage fears of a Burmese-Thai rift following a serious and embarrassing lapse of security. Damrong's "no comment" on how the bombings will affect Burmese exiles indicates that the RTG is waiting to get more information about who is responsible for this spate of bombings before

making any decisions about whether any RTG action to restrict pro-democracy groups would be justified. While it is too early to predict what effect this incident will have on official Thai-Burma relations, violence in the Burmese capital adds more apprehension to the atmosphere for Thai business and government officials already struggling with how to deal with the SPDC. End Comment.

15. (U) Embassy Rangoon and Consulate General Chiang Mai both cleared on this message.
BOYCE